# Article information:

Socioeconomic roots of academic faculty | Nature Human Behaviour
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-022-01425-4>

# Article summary:

1. The socioeconomic backgrounds of professors have a significant impact on their academic attainment and scientific influence, but there are few systematic studies on this topic.

2. Family socioeconomic status (SES) impacts children's educational attainment in numerous ways, including through advantaged cultural and social capital, "concerted cultivation," and resourceful social networks.

3. Faculty tend to come from highly educated families, with over half having at least one parent with a master's degree or Ph.D., making them 12-25 times more likely to have a parent with a Ph.D. than the general population.

# Article rating:

Appears moderately imbalanced: The article provides some useful information, but is missing several important points or pieces of evidence that would be required to present the discussed topics in a balanced and reliable way. You are encouraged to seek a more balanced perspective on the presented issues by exploring the provided research topics and looking at different information sources.

# Article analysis:

The article "Socioeconomic roots of academic faculty" published in Nature Human Behaviour provides a comprehensive analysis of the socioeconomic backgrounds of US-based tenure-track professors across eight disciplines. The authors aim to investigate how childhood SES is related to faculty placement within academia, how the role of SES varies across broad disciplines, and how parental advanced degrees relate to the likelihood that their children become and remain as faculty.

The article presents a well-researched and detailed analysis of the issue at hand. The authors have used a large survey of tenure-track faculty at Ph.D.-granting departments in the United States from eight academic disciplines, which was augmented with national estimates of educational attainment, income, and rural or urban classification by zip code from various sources. This allowed them to contrast survey characteristics with patterns in the general US population.

The article highlights that faculty tend to come from highly educated families, with nearly a quarter reporting at least one parent holding a Ph.D., and over half having at least one parent with a master's degree or Ph.D. The authors estimate that faculty are on average between 12 and 25 times more likely to have a parent with a Ph.D. than the general population.

However, there are some potential biases in the article that need to be considered. Firstly, the study only focuses on US-based tenure-track professors across eight disciplines, which may not be representative of other countries or academic fields. Secondly, while the authors acknowledge that socioeconomic diversity is likely to deeply shape the type of scholarship that faculty produce and train scholars they train, they do not provide concrete evidence for this claim.

Moreover, while the article provides insights into how family SES impacts children's educational attainment in numerous ways, it does not explore counterarguments or alternative explanations for these findings. For example, it does not consider whether innate ability or motivation could also play a role in determining educational outcomes.

In conclusion, while "Socioeconomic roots of academic faculty" provides valuable insights into an important issue within academia, it is important to consider its potential biases and limitations when interpreting its findings. Further research is needed to fully understand how socioeconomic diversity impacts academic scholarship and training.

# Topics for further research:

* Role of innate ability in determining educational outcomes
* Socioeconomic diversity and academic scholarship
* Impact of parental education on children's academic success
* International comparison of faculty socioeconomic backgrounds
* Relationship between faculty socioeconomic backgrounds and research topics
* Strategies for increasing socioeconomic diversity in academia

# Report location:

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